Robert Sillers
Lt Company I. 1st Regt
L. Artillery
Alexandria
Va

1859

The Ruffner Pamphlet

AND ITS ENDORSERS.

LET EVERY BODY READ AND JUDGE FOR THEMSELVES.

FROM THE OPPOSITION PARTY OF NORFOLK,

TO THE PEOPLE OF VIRGINIA.

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MEETING AT ASHLAND HALL.

PURSUANT to notice, a meeting of the citizens of Norfolk, who are opposed to the election of John Letcher, was held on Wednesday evening, January 5th, at Ashland Hall. On motion, Dr. WM. N. MCKENNEY was called to the Chair, and WM. C. MARROW was appointed Secretary.

On motion of SOLOMON CHERRY, Esq., the Chair named Messrs. SOLOMON CHERRY, D. T. BISBIE, ANDREW L. HILL, SYLVANUS HARTSHORN, J. A. SAUNDERS, THOMAS J. CORPREW, and WM. T. MORRIS, as a Committee to prepare resolutions expressive of the meeting, who, through their Chairman, Mr. CHERRY, presented the following Resolutions and Address, which, after reading, were unanimously adopted:

Whereas, it is usual for all meetings to present an expression of their views, therefore,

Resolved, That the following Address be adopted, as expressive of the views of the opposition party of the city of Norfolk, and as a greeting to their fellows in sentiment throughout the State of Virginia.

Resolved, That a Committee of fifty be appointed by the Chair, to represent us in the Convention to be held at the city of Richmond, on the 10th of February next, to nominate opposition candidates for the offices of Governor, Lieut. Governor and Attorney General, and that all other citizens of Norfolk who may be in Richmond on the day of the Convention, who are opposed to the election of John Letcher, be requested to act as delegates.

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ADDRESS.

THIS Address is made to the Virginia public, under a strong sense of the responsibility of the occasion. The Democratic party, in the nomination of John Letcher for the office of Chief Magistrate of this time-honored Commonwealth, has committed an act which threatens the ultimate, if not speedy overthrow of African slavery,—an institution which our forefathers inaugurated, which, commencing with the infancy of Virginia, has grown with her growth and strengthened with her strength; which has ever and been a recognized policy, cherished and sustained by her people with unswerving affection, and so interwoven with her moral and physical condition, as to have become a part of her very being. We do not say that it is the *design* of the greater portion of the Democratic party to bring about a result so abhorrent to every feeling of Virginia patriotism. Nay, we would fain hope—if such hope were possible,—that such was not the design of *any* of the fomenters of this act of mischief and ruin. Yet no one can deny that the tendency of this nomination—nay, that its certain effect, will be to shake the institution of slavery to its very foundations, and, if successful before the people—the inevitable result must be its ultimate overthrow. With then every disposition of charity towards those who have foisted this evil selection upon the Democratic party, we cannot acquit a large proportion from a palpable design to use it for purposes, from the very contemplation of which, every friend of Virgina and the South, and that peculiar institution must recoil in mortification and dismay. That this is so, and that we are fully justified in presenting this alarming view, we shall prove by the record, that in 1847, John Letcher participated in a general debate on the question of abolitionizing Western Virginia.—We shall prove that this was a matter of general comment and attention for weeks and months. We shall prove that after all this time, he was the second signer of a call upon Dr. Ruffner, which spread before Virginia and the world, sentiments more foully abolition than ever fell from the lips of Hale, Seward, Garrison, or Giddings. We shall show him as inveighing in the Convention of 1851, against "the niggerocracy and niggerology of Eastern Virginia," and shall by this record convict him of the most unmitigated abolitionism, of treasonable designs and purposes, deliberately perpetrated, and with malice aforethought. Let the record be carefully scanned, and the results noted.

In 1847, the question of the policy of abolishing slavery in Western Virginia came before the Franklin Society of Lexington, Va. Among the members of this Society, were several gentlemen of mature years, and distinguished ability. At the hands of these gentlemen the question received a full and thorough discussion, pro and con. Among the chief advocates of Abolition, or Emancipation, was Dr. Ruffner, whose arguments were comprehensive and plausible, and delivered in a manner which proved how much his heart was set upon the scheme of abolitionizing Western Virginia. His remarkable doctrines, together with the remarkable strength of the arguments by which they were supported, excited unusnal comment and attention in Lexington and the surrounding country, and were the theme of general conversation in private as well as public circles. But the friends of abolition were not satisfied by this amount of attention, and perhaps, also, were so emboldened by the large number of converts to the abolition faith, that they determined to have the entire argument in its favor presented to the Virginia public, and in this view called on Dr. Ruffner to write it out for general dissemination. The letter making this call is given in full in another part of this document. Its *object* and *intention* CANNOT BE MISTAKEN. It plainly says "that believing his argument not only able, but UNANSWERABLE, and that its publication will tend to draw the public mind to a CORRECT CONCLUSION on this momentous question," they beg that he will furnish a full statement of the argument for the public press. They further say, that they do not expect him to write out the argument precisely as he delivered it, nor is it their wish, but their desire is for him to go further "and present the WHOLE ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF THE PROPOSITION." In view of the general interest taken in the discussion, the comment it excited, and the time allowed for reflection; can there be a doubt of the EARNEST WISH, and DETERMINED OBJECT of this call? Can language be made more expressive than that we have quoted? It declares the argument UNANSWERABLE, and that its publication will tend to draw the public mind to a CORRECT CONCLUSION upon the subject, and beg him not to confine himself to the mere words used in debate, but to go further and mage the argument AS STRONG AS POSSIBLE IN FAVOR OF THE PROPOSITION. They do not even allow the slavery side of the argument A CHANCE be-

fore the public eye, but send out the *bane* of abolitionism unaccompanied by the antidote. This call was responded to by Dr. Ruffner in a comprehensive, learned, and most plausible argument in favor of negro Emancipation, which is replete with the foulest abolition sentiment, the most virulent abuse of the institution, and the most degrading admissions of Virginia inferiority, "*because of this curse of slavery.*" The record shows that the letter which called out this most dangerous incendiary, and treasonable document, has, for its second signature, the name of John Letcher; the man who now demands the suffrages of Virginia slaveholders for the office of their Chief Magistrate, the conservator of their sectional rights, and guardian of their peculiar institution!

The Legislative session of 1832 was prolific of political burials. Every body may recollect that in that session the question of Negro Emancipation came before the Legislature of Virginia. Every body may recollect that the cause then found many advocates. But every body must also recollect, that nearly every one who then avowed themselves Emancipationists, by that act of avowal dug their political graves. That in that avowal they committed the *unpardonable political sin*—whose enormity was never to be mitigated by any act of private repentance or public recantation—which no lapse of time could wipe out from public memory; but which has dogged most of them to their very graves. Yet the men who had committed this offence had every thing to impel them on the course they had chosen. A few short weeks before, a bloody insurrection, headed by a fanatical negro, had desolated a district of Eastern Virginia with rapine, arson, and death. The whole State was roused to the intensity of excitement and alarm. Scarcely a man who did not look to the abolition of slavery as the only measure of safety. Scarcely a woman or child, that did not weepingly beg the removal of the negroes as their only hope of life, and nearly every newspaper demanded it. Impelled by the flood tide of this excitement the general demand seemed to be for the abrogation of the institution. To add to their excuse, the members avowing emancipation sentiments, were chiefly young men—mere youths, of unfixed opinions, and most naturally swayed by popular clamor. It would seem that if ever Virginia could pardon the sin of Abolition in her public men, it would be under circumstances like these. *But that sin was never excused.* It was a sin of such enormity that no expiation could wipe it out, no repentance could bring forgiveness, and around which no lapse of time could throw even the cheap mercy of forgetfulness; but which has been brought before their vision an interminable "raw head and bloody bones"—at each successive step of their career. Such has been the affection of Virginia for her peculiar institution—such her jealousy of any interference with its weal—that she has refused extenuation for a few words against it, even when those words were forced by personal fear, and popular clamor!

But JOHN LETCHER, whom he brought his active and powerful influence to bear in spreading this infinitely more vile, incendiary and dangerous firebrand of Dr. Ruffner, had no such excuse. Instead of having the youth of the Emancipationists in 1832, he stood in 1847, the man Abolitionist, in the full maturity of judgment, high in station, and higher still in the hope and prospects of political distinction. Instead of being carried away by a sudden excitement, he signed that call after a full discussion, after weeks of deliberate reflection, and with cool calculating malice aforethought. Instead of being swerved from his line of duty by universal clamor, he *deliberately* and *insultingly* arrayed himself against the settled sentiment of Virginia, a sentiment, too, now raised to the very intensity of indignation by the vile assaults, and unmitigated, and outrageous abuse of abolition speekers and press. Yes, at such a time and in such a manner did John Letcher deliberately, *and for a purpose*, lend his aid to kindle a fire of abolitionism in Virginia, a thousand times more fatal and dangerous, than that of the freedom shrieking horde, which we have so much feared, hated and despised.

But there is another consideration in this connection too important to be overlooked. In 1832, there was no outside pressure—no foreign assaults upon us or our institutions. All questions pertaining to slavery could then be discussed as a *domestic* matter, and however repugnant certain sentiments might be to the body of our people, those who made them, were not guilty of aiding or abetting an open and avowed enemy. But in 1847, the case was widely different. A powerful party had risen outside of Virginia, and the South, who were making the most bitter and determined assaults upon our institutions.—It was then that the people of Virginia called for a general sentiment on this subject, for a general rallying in the common defence.—It was then that the public voice proclaimed that there was no middle ground on this question, that "he who was not for us was against us," and that every man was to be a trusted friend, or hated as a foe. We all know how universal this feeling became. We all know how bitterly the abolitionist was execrated, as an enemy with whom there could me no peace—no terms of compromise. It was THEN, that John Letcher helped to raise the standard of defection in our midst. It was THEN that he helped to encourage, to give aid and comfort to the common foe. It was THEN that he proposed to go over to the enemy with half the territory, and more than half the population of Virginia! It was one thing to be an Abolitionist in 1832, but quite another, *and a thousand times worse thing to be one in* 1847. It was one thing for Benedict Arnold to be loyal to the Government, and to fight for Great Britain, in 1765; but quite another for him to do so fifteen years

afterward. The one was the exercise of an undoubted right of opinion, if not a loyal duty,—the other was traitorous to his country and his kin—a crime which has yoked his name to eternal infamy! Can Virginia excuse that in John Letcher, a thousandth part of which has brought down upon the devoted heads of the youths of 1832, such undying retribution? Can we excuse him for endorsing and disseminating doctrines which, had it been done by an Abolitionist from outside our borders, would have consigned him to the immediate and just vengeance of an infuriated public? No, indeed! Unless Virginia shall not only have been lost to every sense of justice, but shall herself have been abolitionized to the very core.

We have said that the session of 1832 was prolific of political burials. The canvass of 1859, will be infinitely more so, if Virginia holds firm to her original faith and love.—Let the young Democrats of Virginia reflect well, whether they can afford to sacrifice themselves in the insane attempt to uphold their party in a proceeding so utterly at variance with the honor and welfare of the State, and with its own former policy and professions. We know that many of them have become Democrats because of Democratic fidelity to the institution of slavery, from the outcry their party has made upon the soundness of Harrison, Clay, Taylor, Summers, Rives, Preston, Botts, and other leaders of the Opposition. Are they now prepared to acknowledge that all these high professions of love *for*, and fidelity *to* the institution of slavery, were but "sounding brass and tinkling cymbals"—that they were all a wretched humbug, a miserable delusion, an arrant attempt to blackleg their opponents *out of*, and themselves *into*, the confidence of the people? We admit that *party* has ties and obligations, but protest that state and sections had ties and obligations of a far higher, stronger, and of a more sacred character. Let them consider this well before they follow their party in a lead that can only be accounted for by the ancient maxim—"*those the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad.*"

But that the public may judge for itself of the character and sentiments of Mr. Letcher, as established by the record, we shall proceed to lay that record before them. We shall first exhibit a digest of the Ruffner pamphlet—whose arguments HE declared to be *unanswerable*, "and calculated to draw the public mind to CORRECT CONCLUSIONS on this momentous question," and which *he* wished presented in the *strongest possible form*. We shall pay our respects to him in another field, the Constitutional Convention of 1851, where he inveighed against the Niggerocracy and Niggerology of Eastern Virginia. Let the record be noted, and let our digest be carefully compared with the original, and most insidious, dangerous, and infamous document.

SYNOPSIS OF THE RUFFNER PAMPHLET.

The Pamphlet commences by saying:—"Now is the time when we of Western Virginia should review our public affairs, and consider what measures are necessary and expedient to promote the welfare of ourselves and our posterity." The remainder of the first paragraph goes on to assert, that the census will show that Western Virginia has the majority of the white voters of Virginia, and will show the unfairness of the present power of Eastern Virginia through the inequality of representation—that is, by allowing the number of slaves to weigh in that representation.

The second paragraph asserts the patience of the West in not pressing the white basis, and the third proposes to strengthen this claim (the white basis) by connecting with it another of equally momentous consequences—and in some respects even more—to our public welfare. This other proposition, as the context will prove, is nothing short of the proposal to ABOLITIONIZE WESTERN VIRGINIA!

The fourth paragraph asserts that the Western people claim that the majority shall rule, and that slaves be allowed no part of the representation; but warns them that as slavery is a growing institution, the time will come when there will be a stronger interest in the West in its favor, which, in the hour of decision, may favor the East in securing her claims on account of her vast slave property, and then says, "But let all Western Virginia, on due consideration, conclude that slavery is a PERNICIOUS INSTITUTION, AND MUST BE REMOVED." The fifth paragraph says: "The more the subject is considered, the more you will be convinced that both these questions (abolition and white basis) are so intimately connected, that to insure success in either, both must be united, both in discussions among ourselves and with Eastern Virginia.

The next three paragraphs embody a general complaint of legislative unfairness toward Western Virginia; the inference being that she derives this power through the aid of her slave representation. The next refers to the emancipation legislative resolutions of 1832, which were excited by the Southampton insurrection, "which had made every white man think of the evils of slavery." "The resolutions," it says, "embodied a plan by which our State might in fifty years get rid of the evils of slavery." The next says that there can be no rational doubt that in Western Virginia the measure,

had it been carried fifteen years ago, would have wrought a most happy change in the prospects and condition of the country." It then, speaking of the measure, continues, "Thongh defeated for the time, the friends of gradual emancipation were not in despair. There was a general acknowledgment of the *evils of slavery*, and strong hopes were entertained that in a few years a decided majority of the Legislature would be for ridding the country of this DELETERIOUS INSTITUTION."

The next three paragraphs give us reasons why this fond hope was not realized: *first*, the political inability of the West, and second, the efforts of the outside Abolitionists. The last it describes as doing the good cause of emancipation much harm by their indiscreet zeal, and bitterly complains that "they (the Abolitionists) have done more to *rivet the chains of the slave*, and to *fasten the curse of slavery upon the country* than all the pro-slavery men in the world," but begs that we should not let the unwisdom of this meddlesome sect "blind our eyes to the evils of slavery, and to tie up our hands when the condition of the country, and the welfare of ourselves and children, summon us to immediate action." After further fault-finding of the Abolitionists, whom it consigns to the watchful care of those who will take care of them, it proposes that "we of West Virginia steer our course in the safe middle way, and seek to *remove the plague of slavery from our limits;*" and goes on to say, that against the Abolitionists they would maintain the right of slave-holding, while against the pro-slavery men they would maintain the *expediency of removing slavery* from Western Virginia, *and from every other State, and portion of a State, where the number of slaves is not too large.*" In the next paragraph it alludes to slavery as a "disease," and says that "if West Virginia shall call for a law to remove slavery from her side of the Blue Ridge, that East Virginia shall not refuse her consent because the measure may not be palatable to herself."

In the succeeding paragraph it admits, that as no State has abolished slavery in one part of her State and retained it in another, that the scheme of partial abolition which he proposes may seem impracticable, and devotes the next six paragraphs to an explanation of its feasibility, and in conclusion tauntingly says—"If East Virginia apprehends that the delegates from the FREE COUNTIES would often speak more freely about slavery than she would like to hear in her central city of Richmond, let her agree to remove the seat of government to Staunton, near the centre of our territory and of our *white population, and she will be free from all annoyance of this sort!*"

In the next paragraph it goes on to say: "We shall now proceed, fellow-citizens, to lay before you some facts and arguments which prove the expediency of ABOLISHING SLAVERY IN WESTERN VIRGINIA," &c.

It next goes on to say, that no one who has observed the comparative prosperity of slave and free States, "can doubt for a moment, that the system of free labor promotes the growth and prosperity of States in a much higher degree than the system of slave labor." It then, by way of illustrating his argument, makes the following comparison between free and slave States, which we quote fully in its own words, as follows: "It is the common remark of all who have traveled through the United States, that the free and slave States exhibit a striking contrast in their appearance. In the older free States are seen all the marks of prosperity—a dense and increasing population; thriving villages, towns and cities; a neat and productive agriculture, growing manufactures and active commerce." The slave States it describes in these words: "In the older parts of the slave States—with a few local exceptions—are seen, on the contrary, too evident signs of stagnation or of positive decay—a sparse population—a slovenly agriculture spread over vast fields that are wearing out among others worn out and desolate; villages and towns 'few and far between,' rarely growing, often decaying, sometimes mere remnants of what they were, sometimes deserted ruins haunted only by owls, generally no manufactures or even trades, except the indispensable few—commerce and navigation abandoned as far as possible to the few States, and generally, instead of the bustle and stir of industry, a dull and dreamy stillness, broken, if broken at all, only by the wordy brawl of politics!"

It then goes on to prove the great superiority of the free over the slave States, and promises that it will make the proof so plain that its readers "cannot mistake in forming their judgment of their comparative prosperity." It then proceeds at great length and with great exactness to a comparison of the relative population of free and slave States, showing the superiority of the former; and maintains, that slavery checks the growth of States, by repelling emigrants and driving out free laborers. It maintains that this even does not sufficiently show the evils of slavery, because in most of the slave States "slave labor, operating on new soils of the best quality, has not yet had time to do its work of *impoverishment and desolation.*" He says the slave States ought to have grown twice as fast, and, by way of illustrating the curse that slavery inflicts on the land, says, "Even cold barren New England, though more than twice as thickly settled, grew in population at a faster rate than the old slave States." It says that here "a new wilderness is gaining upon the cultivated land," and asks "What has done this work of desolation? Not war or pestilence, not aggression of rulers, civil or ecclesiastical; but SLAVERY, A CURSE MORE DESTRUCTIVE IN ITS EFFECTS THAN ANY OF THEM!" Continuing on, it says, "Old Virginia was the first to sow this land of ours with slavery; she is also the first to reap the full harvest of DESTRUCTION. Her lowland neighbors of Maryland and the Carolinas were not much behind at the *seeding;*

nor are they far behind at the INGATHERING OF DESOLATION. Most sorry are we for this fallen condition of the Old Dominion, and of her neighbors; but such being the fact, we state it as an argument and a warning to our West Virginia. It demonstrates the RUINOUS EFFECT OF SLAVERY in the counties in which the longest and most complete trial of it has been made."

It then remarks, "There are certain drugs of which large doses are poisonous, but small ones are innocent and even salutary. Slavery is not of this kind. Large doses of it kill, but smaller doses, mix them as you will, are sure to sicken and debilitate the body politic." It then goes on to show how the poison of slavery, which in Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri was not strong enough to kill them, had given them a slow and sickly growth, but rejoices in the prospect, that "the physical advantages of Missouri are drawing such a multitude of free emigrants into her, that her small amount of slavery must ere long give way and vanish before the genius of universal emancipation. Maryland has comparatively few slaves, and these are found chiefly about her old tide water shores, *where, like the locusts*, THEY HAVE EATEN UP NEARLY EVERY GREEN THING." It urges that the progress of Maryland, even under the "*dead weight*" of slavery, is slower than that of Pennsylvania, "and would *be completely stopped* if this free neighbor did not send a revivifying influence into her upper counties and her city of Baltimore;" and adds, "Our own West Virginia furnishes conclusive evidence that *slavery*, in all quantities and degrees, has a *pernicious influence* on the public welfare," and farther on, "that it checks, and then stops, population; and that it hangs like *a dead weight* upon the country."

It then proceeds to argue that slavery drives away population, and "proves" it by the emigration from Virginia, where it claims that slavery "has driven one-third of all the emigrants who have gone from the old States to the new." "Many of these multitudes," it continues, "who have left the slave States have *shunned the regions of slavery*, and settled in the free counties of the West," because "they found, by sad experience, that a country of slaves was not the country for them. *It is a truth, a certain truth, that slavery drives free laborers—farmers, mechanics—and some of the best of them too, out of the country, and fills their place with negroes.*" In this part of the pamphlet it sneeringly remarks: "Some Virginia politicians proudly,—yes, *proudly*, fellow-citizens, call our old commonwealth, 'The Mother of States.' These *enlightened* patriots might pay her a still higher compliment by calling her the *Grand-mother of States*. For our part, we are grieved and mortified to think of the lean and haggard condition of our venerable mother. Her black children have sucked her so dry that now, for a long time past, she has not milk enough for her offspring, black or white."

We give the next paragraph entirely in the words of the pamphlet. It says: "What is it but slavery that makes Marylanders and Carolinians, and especially Old Virginians and New Virginians, leave their country at such a rate? Some go because they detest slavery and desire to get away from it; others because they have gloomy forebodings of what is to befall slave-holders, and wish to leave their children in a country of happy prospects; others because they cannot get profitable employment among slave-holders; others, high-spirited working men, will not stay in a country where *slavery degrades the working man*; others because they see that their country, for some reasons, does not prosper, while they see that other countries, not far off, are prospering and will afford better hopes of prosperity to themselves; others—a numerous class—who are slave-holders, and cannot live without slaves, finding that they cannot live with them on their worn-out soils, go to seek better lands and more profitable crops, where slave labor may yet awhile enable themselves and their children to live."

In the next brief paragraphs it proceeds to explain the causes of the slow growth of Virginia and Kentucky in comparison with free States and begs the reader "to observe, how every class of facts that bear at all upon the subject *lead uniformly to the same conclusion; how every line of inquiry points to* SLAVERY *as the original cause of inferior prosperity or of positive decline.*"

In an attempt to prove the above conclusion, the next eight or ten paragraphs are devoted to an examination of the comparative agricultural prosperity of the slave and the free States, in which the inferiority of the latter is apparently exhibited. For instance, it states the average value of labor in the free States is about $265 to the hand, while that of the slave States is only $130, and continues, "thus it appears from the best evidence the case admits of, that the farmers of the Middle States, with their free labor, produce more than twice as great a value to the hand as those of the old slave States. It urges that lower Maryland, having slaves, is languishing, while upper Maryland, cultivated by free labor, has a thriving agriculture with a growing population;" and further on, "Now it is admitted on all hands, that slave labor is better adapted to agriculture than to any other branch of industry; and that if not good for agriculture, *it is really good for nothing*. Therefore, since in agriculture slave labor is proved to be far less productive than free labor—*slavery is demonstrated to be not only unprofitable, but* DEEPLY INJURIOUS *to public prosperity.*" Immediately after it says, "Agriculture in the slave States may be characterized by two epithets—*extensive, exhaustive*, which in all agricultural countries forebode two things—*impoverishment, depopulation*" and asserts that it cannot be otherwise with laborers who work only by compulsion, for the benefit only of their masters, and whose sole interest in the matter is to do as little and consume as much as possible." It goes on to present a glowing account of the prosperity that would irradiate West Vir-

ginia, if freedom superseded slavery, ending in the following jubilant strain: "Then how changed would be the scene! Our desolate mountains enlivened by flocks, and ten thousand now silent nooks and dells, vocal with the songs of Liberty!—the Mountain Nymph, sweet Liberty! Why is it not so in our mountains? They who keep slaves cannot keep sheep. The occupation requires care; but what do slaves care? POOR WRETCHES! WHAT SHOULD MAKE THEM CARE?" Listen, slave-holders of Virginia, to this abuse of your peculiar institution—this jubilant song of the band of Lexington Abolitionists, of whom John Letcher was one of the chiefest, and tell us where you can find more bitter imprecations upon the one, or greater jubilation over the other, even among that pestiferous horde who have latterly filled our ears with their "SHRIEKS FOR FREEDOM?" Did ever the eloquence of Greely, Giddings, or Garrison excel this rampant jubilation, which was so fully and "*honestly*" endorsed by "HONEST JOHN?"

The pamphlet then follows with a chapter upon "*The influence of slavery upon manufactures.*" This chapter commences by ridiculing Southern efforts in manufacturing, and sneeringly remarks: "We hear, indeed, once in a while, a loud report in a Southern newspaper, that *the South is waking up*, because some new cotton mill, or some other manufacturing establishment, has been erected in a slave State!" "Even the common mechanical trades *do not flourish in a slave State,*" says this beautiful work, "for," it urges further on, "SLAVERY PARALYZES OUR ENERGIES, DISPERSES OUR POPULATION AND KEEPS US FEW AND POOR, in spite of the bountiful gifts of nature, with which a benign Providence has endowed our country." It then alludes to our mineral wealth, to the water power of Richmond, and our other advantages, and, after an examination of the matter, brings itself adroitly to the conclusion that it "proves that their institution of slavery disqualifies them from pursuing any occupation, *except this same ruinous system of agriculture,*" and closes by saying, "As Lorenzo Dow used to say—YOU CANNOT DENY IT." Who *will* deny this sage conclusion, Virginians? Will you? Will you? Who *will?* Who CAN? Who DARE! The next eleven paragraphs of this chapter are devoted to an extremely ingenious argument to show that slavery and manufactures cannot exist, and concludes as follows: "The reader must have observed also, how uniformly Maryland has served as an intermediate stepping stone, as we descend from the high level of *Northern prosperity to the low ground of* VIRGINIA DEPRESSION."

Next follows a chapter upon "*Commerce and Navigation,*" embodying the argument, that slavery kills both, and closes with a chapter on ship-building, the character of which may be divined from these closing sentences: "We do not blame our Southern people for abstaining from all employments of this kind. What could they do? *Set their negroes to building ships? Who ever imagined such an absurdity?* But could they not hire white men to do these things? No: for in the first place, *Southern white men have no skill in such matters;* and in the next place, Northern white men cannot be hired in the South, without receiving a heavy premium for working in a slave State."

Next follows a chapter on Common Schools and Popular Education. It is impossible for our remaining space to follow the pamphlet through the argument. It is enough to say, that it charges slavery with being the foe of education and intellectual development. It asserts in so many words, that "*slavery exerts a most pernicious influence on the cause of education,* by keeping the white population scattered and poor, and making the poorer part of them generally *indifferent about the education of their children;*" and again: that "*The people of the slave States are not, and cannot be,* HALF AS WELL *accommodated with schools as the free States; and* SLAVERY INFLICTS ON MULTITUDES OF THEM THE CURSE OF IGNORANCE AND MENTAL DEGRADATION THROUGH LIFE!"

The pamphlet continues: "Having thus briefly, yet we believe sufficiently, established the proposition that *slavery is pernicious to the welfare of States,* we shall conclude the argument by establishing the particular proposition that *slavery is pernicious to the welfare of West Virginia.*" It then goes through some eight or ten paragraphs to show that the growth of West Virginia has been slower than that of West Pennsylvania, &c., &c. It claims that the counties where many slaves are owned, are beginning to send out their population, and closes with the following "Elegant Extracts:" "*The land has already got* SLAVE-SICK, *and* IS SPEWING OUT ITS INHABITANTS. *What a pity that so rich and lovely a land should be afflicted with this* YELLOW FEVER *and this* BLACK VOMIT!" Read these elegant extracts, fellow-citizens of Virginia! Roll them as a sweet morsel under your tongue! Talk to your neighbors about this land afflicted with SLAVE SICKNESS, this PEOPLE SPEWING, this YELLOW FEVER and this BLACK VOMIT!

Next follow fifty-three other paragraphs, replete with similar manifestations of the spirit of this production. It is unnecessary to tire the reader with any further quotations. *Nor indeed could we quote them in their extent, and in all their enormity, without making ourselves liable to indictment for the publication of a treasonable and incendiary document.* One sentence speaks of Virginia as "*an infected district;*" another tell us that "in West Virginia *the* CORROSIVE TOUCH OF SLAVERY *has shown its* CANKEROUS EFFECTS;" another proposes to show "*the necessity of* IMMEDIATE ACTION *to deliver our West Virginia from the growing evils of slavery;*" another maintains "*that even a few slaves in a new country may do it an immense injury;*" another that "*slavery naturally tends to increase from small beginnings, until the slaves out-number the whites and* THE COUNTRY IS RUINED;" another says, "*Be-*

hold in the East the direful consequences of letting slavery grow up to an OPPRESSIVE AND HEART-SICKENING BURDEN *upon a community!*" and exclaims, "*Cast it off, West Virginians, while yet you have the power; for if you let it descend unbroken to your children, it will have grown to a* MOUNTAIN OF MISERY *upon their heads.*" Another predicts that the time will come when "*Eastern slaves will be sent to a market in West Virginia. Every valley will echo with the cry*—NEGROES! NEGROES FOR SALE! DOG CHEAP! DOG CHEAP! *And because they are dog cheap the people will buy them;* and urges that thus, "*its population shall be as* RING-STREAKED AND SPECKLED *as* JACOB'S FLOCK IN PADAN ARAN," and "*East Virginia will have triumphed, or rather,* SLAVERY WILL HAVE TRIUMPHED, *and* ALL VIRGINIA *will have become* A LAND OF DARKNESS *and of the* SHADOW OF DEATH." "*Then,*" it says, "*by a forbearance which has no merit, a supineness which has no excuse, you will have given your children for their inheritance, this lovely land* BLACKENED BY A NEGRO POPULATION—THE OFF-SCOURINGS OF EASTERN VIRGINIA—*the* FAG END OF SLAVERY—*the* LOATHSOME DREGS *of that* CUP OF ABOMINATION, *which has already* SICKENED TO DEATH *the eastern half of our commonwealth. Delay not, then, we beseech you, to raise a barrier against this* STYGIAN INUNDATION—*to stand at the Blue Ridge, and with sovereign energy say to this* BLACK SEA OF MISERY—'HITHERTO SHALT THOU COME, AND NO FARTHER.'"

Here fellow-citizens of Virginia, you have all of the RUFFNER PAMPHLET, that the limits of this address will allow us to give. We are sure that we have given you enough to show the deep seated purpose of the author, his aiders and abetters. We quote in their own words their purpose to Abolitionize West Virginia; their treasonable and deeply laid plans to tear the whole country west of the Blue Ridge from the other half of the Commonwealth—from the fond proud associations of Virginia's ancient prestige and renown—from the home and grave of Washington! We have also, we are sure, given you sufficient proof of the undying hatred of these men for the institution of slavery, an institution which Virginia has so long cherished, and watchfully protected against all foes open or covert, and from *within* as well as *without* her borders. But we have not, nor could we, in so brief a synopsis of so long a pamphlet, give you more than a faint glimmering of the seductive argument, the insidious sophistry, the thousand and one appeals to every feeling and every interest, that accompanied this bold attempt to lure Virginians from their first love. To form an idea of this—an idea of how insidious, how plausible, how seductive, and HOW DANGEROUS the fire-brand is, of which we present this brief shadow, the reader must read the original document for himself—to see in its corrupt appeals, its tempting lures, its magnificent promises, the shrewd import of its seductive teachings, the deep profound of its treasonable purposes and designs. The OLD SERPENT OF ALL, never exhibited more enticing lures to Eve in the Garden, and we may almost say, for a more damnable purpose.

But we have given enough to show the *character* of the documant, and the purpose of those who endorsed it, and scattered its treason like so many firebrands over the State. Can language be plainer? Can purpose be less disguised or more boldly avowed? Can any man, even of the stupidest intellect, fail to see its object and design? Again, can any abuse of Virginia inferiority be found more virulent in the speeches of Sumner or Burlingame? Can any document, speech, or essay, be produced from the vile Abolition press of Garrison himself, which deals in more foul imprecation of the institution of slavery, which charges more of dire and evil consequences upon it, or which speaks with more *taunting* and *sneering bitterness* of its effects upon the land? Does this pamphlet not constantly allude to it as *curse*, a *disease*, a *plague spot*, a *nuisance*, and say "*it must be removed?*" Does it not paint it as in the highest degree *destructive* and *degrading?*—Does it not declare this, the one unmistakable cause, of "Virginia inferiority?" Does it not array a thousand insidious reasons for abolishing slavery in every part of Virginia, "and in every Sate and part of a State where the slaves are not too numerous?"—Does it not in so many words, and in express language propose to ABOLISH SLAVERY IN WEST VIRGINIA? Does it not tauntingly remind us that we can get rid of the annoyance of abolition talk, in our central city of Richmond, by removing the Capitol to Staunton? Does it not speak of Virginia in the most degrading contrast with free States?—in terms that might well cause every citizen of the once proud Old Dominion to hang his head in very shame? Does it not many times and often apply the terms *deleterious*, *pernicious*, *desolating*, to slavery; and everywhere describe it not only as a *dead weight*, but as a species of parasite, drawing the life blood from the very vitals of the State, and everywhere utterly withering and destructive?—Does it not with a species of sacrilegious wit, sneeringly propose to call Virginia the "Grandmother of States," and speak of her lean and haggard condition because she has been sucked dry by her black children? Does it not declare slavery *a curse, worse than war, pestilence*, or *famine*, or the *oppression of rulers, civil* or *eclesiastical?* Does it not accuse it of having eaten up nearly every green thing in Maryland? Does it not represent

slavery as a poison that either kills or debilitates? Does it not accuse it of having driven away our population, and desolated our territory as with fire and desolation? Does it not charge that slavery degrades the working man? Does it not sing hosannahs to Liberty, in the true abolition style of the Garrison and Giddings school? Does it not say of the slaves: "What do slaves care, *poor wretches what should make them care?*—Does it not charge that slavery paralyzes our energies, disperses our population, and keeps us few and poor? Does it not charge that slavery inflicts on multitudes of white men the curse of ignorance and mental degradation through life? and does it not say—as Lorenzo Dow used to say: "YOU CANNOT DENY IT."

Does it not also declare that the land has got *slave sick and is spewing out its inhabitants!* Does it not speak of slavery as a YELLOW FEVER and BLACK VOMIT? Does it not speak of Virginia as an *infected district* and flippantly talk of the *corrosive touch of slavery*, and of its *cankerous effects?* Does it not speak of it as an *oppressive and heart-sickening burthen*, and warn its readers to cast it off, before it becomes *a mountain of misery* upon their heads? Does it not speak of the *land of slavery* as *the land of darkness, and of the shadow of death?* Does it not warn "our fellow-citizens of West Virginia to stand at the gap of the Blue Ridge, and drive back this "*fag end of slavery*," this "STYGIAN INUNDATION," this BLACK SEA OF MISERY, these LOATHSOME DRUGS OF THAT CUP OF ABOMINATION WHICH HAS SICKENED TO DEATH *the Eastern half of our Commonwealth?*" Where else, fellow-citizens, can be found such bitter denunciations of our institution, such fierce determination for its abrogation; such aspersions upon its character and effects; such charges upon its influence, and such terms of abuse and virulent anathemas against itself? Where—we repeat—can any thing like this be found in the entire cycle of Abolition appeal, demonstration, or abuse?

It is a matter of common information, that ever since the commencement of Abolition excitement, the Democratic Party South have used it as their chiefest weapon of offence. So long as the memory of the writer runs back, there has not been a single general or State election, in which it has not been used with immense advantage to itself, and the discomfiture of its opponents. This negro excitement, this cry of Abolitionist! Abolitionist! against its opponents, has been the great arm of strength to the Democratic party—an infinitely more fearful weapon to the Whigs and Americans than Sampson's jaw-bone of an ass was to the Philistines.—In 1840, General Harrison was an Abolitionist, because he had left Virginia for a free State—while the confiding affection of the Southern Democracy was placed upon Martin Van Buren, "the Northern man with Southern principles." In 1844, every Southern Democratic paper was filled with charges of abolitionism upon Mr. Clay, while the same charges rang out from the mouth of every Southern speaker, and the whole South was warned against a confidence of one of her own sons, citizens, and defenders; because he was so loose in his fidelity to slavery, as to be as bad, or worse, than a veritable abolitionist. In 1848, the same charge was made against General Taylor, and urged with tremendous force against Mr. Fillmore. In 1851, the same weapon struck down the gubernatorial aspirations of Geo. W. Summers, simply because in 1832, under the influence of an extraordinary clamor he had made in an emancipation speech. In 1852, Gen Scott, and his ticket were denounced as abolition throughout the entire South, not because he had ever written or spoken a word against slavery, but because Wm. H. Seward had been inferentially connected with his nomination. In 1855, the hitherto invincible SAM was brained by the same cudgel. Know Nothingism was suspected, and then rejected in Virginia, because Henry A. Wise discovered the cat abolition, under the meal of Know Nothingism! In 1856, every man who voted for Fillmore was denounced as an ally of Republicanism, while our Democratic friends went into spasmodic convulsions over the very idea of the election of Fremont, and deprecated his elevation to the Presidency as an evil that could be met only by immediate dissolution of the Union, an immediate attack upon Washington, and the seizure of every United States Fort and Arsenal throughout the South. Even while the struggle for Speaker was going on, how many of this party and its press advocated an immediate dissolution of the Union, in the event of the election of Banks. Every body knows and remembers all this, but can any one find in every thing spoken or written by every one of the men we have named, one tithe of the unmitigated Abolitionism of the Ruffner Pamphlet alone! Again, we all know how much all of us have been excited about the abolition harangues of Garrison, Giddings, Greely, and so on, but did they any or all of them ever "spew" out such vile abuse of Virginia and her institutions, or ever foment such treasonable and dangerous attempts for the injury of one, or the overthrow of the other? We maintain that they never have! We maintain that if all New Jersey, New York, New England, Old England, and OLD TOPHET, too, were raked over with a fine tooth comb, that the combined result of the rakings, would not produce a viler specimen of abolition malice, abuse, and treason, than the sweet document we have partially spread before you. Where now is the Pro-slavery alarm excitement and horror, that certain men were wont to exhibit, who now advocate the election of John Letcher as the especial guardian of the very institution, which his pet production has so outrageously assailed? How are we to understand their sudden silence? Were they blacklegs then, or traitors now? One horn of the dilemma or the other they must take, according to the rules themselves have established. Let themselves make the decision.

It has been said that John Letcher signed this docnment in thoughtless compliment to Dr. Ruffner without a knowledge of its contents. A more wretched perversion of facts, in our opinion, was never paraded by mendacious politicians. The facts are that Mr. Letcher participated in that debate, lasting several weeks, being the theme of universal comment, and the cause of immense excitement. He heard every word, and listened to every argument of Dr. Ruffner, and comprehended the full length and scope of his propositions—indeed, he was one of Dr. Ruffner's colleagues im the debate, and one of the main supporters of his argument. Dr. Ruffner, in his reply, addressed to "MOORE, LETCHER & Co." says, "I have enriched my argument by the views and positions of *yourselves*." But the most notable thing in this connection lies in the fact, that MANY MONTHS elapsed between the debate of many weeks' duration, and the time that John Letcher sat down with others to make a written call for this "argument" for publication. Yes, *many months* had occurred of universal comment and attention, and great excitement.—Is it not then a falsehood too palpable to fool babies with, to say that Mr. Letcher signed this call in idle thoughtless compliment!—We cannot believe that there is a man in the State, who, in knowledge of these facts, does not know that the fell purpose and treasonable design of this pamphlet, and every leading idea in it, was just as well known to John Letcher THEN, as it is NOW. Or, indeed—*that he was not*, HIMSELF *as deep in the* MUD, as Ruffner *was in the mire!*

It is also claimed, with equal effrontery, that Dr. Ruffner did not write out the pamphlet as he delivered it, but interpolated obnoxious sentiments and epithets. This Dr. Ruffner denies most emphatically and indignantly; and last July in a public letter to Mr. Letcher, he called on him, or any of his friends, to name *one word, or sentence, or idea, or epithet, in the entire pamphlet*, that was not outspoken in the warm and animated debate upon the subject. John Letcher has never written one word in reply to this demand of Dr. Ruffner. He has been as silent upon the subject as the quietest oyster in Elizabeth River. Like the other shrewd one, he evidently knows when to keep his mouth shut. But *if* Dr. Ruffner *did* "interpolate," why did Mr. Letcher remain so long silent. The extracts before you show the document full of the most malignant abolitionism, that it covers the most outrageous and treasonable designs. On its first page was given the letter signed by John Letcher and his compeers in this enterprise, calling for its publication. It is a declaration too stupid for repetition to say that he did not see this document, published, as it was in his own little village. Why did he let this document go broad-cast over the State under the sanction of his own sign manual, without exposing the fraud which, it is now asserted Dr. R. committed? If John Letcher had never *signed* that call, the fact that he allowed it to have the sanction of his apparent endorsation would have been sufficient for his conviction. The truth is, that when the Abolition firm of "MOORE, LETCHER & COMPANY" endorsed that pamphlet, they endorsed its entire carcass, body, blood and bones, hoek, hide and hair! Interpolation! Reader, examine the Ruffner Pamphlet! See if it is not *one mass* of Abolition treason from one end to the other. There is a ONENESS about the concern that relieves it from the possibility of interpolation! Interpolated indeed! If Dr. R. "interpolated" Abolitionism into it, could not this Abolition be "interpolated out" again? Look again, reader, to see how you could interpolate the Abolition *out* of this document, without "*interpolating out*" the entire concern! You might as well talk about interpolating the nigger out of an unadulterated cuffee, by picking half a dozen warts off his corporation!

The other claim is, that he has recanted. Recanted! Recanted!! When did this recantation first come out? What brought it out? Who ever heard of John Letcher's recantation before he became a prominent candidate for the nomination? Recanted! This claim comes with a most lovely and bewitching grace from the men who would not allow Geo. Summers the benefit of a twenty years' recantation for a single youthful indiscretion, committed under all the exciting associations of 1832. Recantation indeed! Who would not recant for the Governorship of Virginia, with $5,000 a year? Would not Hale, or Giddings, or Garrison, or Theodore Parker?—though it must be confessed, they have not so much to repent of. Recantation! Bought recantation! Interested recantation! Who will be fool enough to put faith in it? Who can value it?

> The devil was sick, the devil a saint would be;
> The devil got well, the devil a saint was he.

So John Letcher was a rampant Abolitionist in 1847. Wishing to be Governor in 1859, he is *not* one. What will he be at the next turn?

There is only one part of the Ruffner Pamphlet that can be read with any thing like a feeling of extenuation. This is the paragraph in which it affects great severity upon the outside Abolitionists. But what calls out this affected severity? Is it in condemnation of their purpose and object? No. How, indeed, could it be when its purpose and basis of action outgoes all of them?—but it was their *manner* of operating which the Ruffner pamphlet complains is stupidly indiscreet—intimating, that in their rampant haste to get at the contents, they have nearly overset the dish. It plainly charges that by this excessive and stupid zeal "*they have done more to* RIVET THE CHAINS OF THE SLAVE, *and* FASTEN THE CURSE OF SLAVERY UPON THE LAND, than all the pro-slavery men in the world!" This certainly must have seemed a great crime in the eyes of the Lexington Abolishers, and well might have called out an expression of their just and holy indignation. In this

way we get at the reason of the pamphlets, occasionally stopping a moment in its abuse of Virginia and slavery, to bestow a thwack or two upon the outside Abolitionists, whose stupid mismanagement had so prejudiced the good cause of slavery extinction. If Bill, with the dark lantern, and Jack, with the "tools," undertake a job of burglary in common, and Bill so mismanages his dark light as to draw upon them the gaze of the night officials, it would be the most natural thing in the world for Jack to bestow upon Bill as much virtuous abuse as the Ruffner pamphlet bestows upon *its* stupid compeers. It is easily understood then, that this fault-finding of the "outsiders" has its origin, either in the professional jealousy which we are apt to see between persons of the same trade, or that disposition to undervalue rival professional skill, which we fear will continue to be an infirmity of humanity, even after the Abolition millennium, so jubilantly pictured in the Ruffner pamphlet! Considering then the *cause* of this abuse of outsiders, the reason why their cotemporaries at Lexington had occasion to complain of them, we leave it to the reader to make up his own opinion as to the amount of excuse this fact should afford. Candor compels us to admit, that the Lexington branch of the Abolition family certainly managed their attempt, much more adroitly than their brothers in New and Old England —that *their* plans were much more completely laid—were less likely to induce discovery and excite alarm, and were thus infinitely better calculated "to abolish slavery in every State, and every part of a State," than their more rampant but infinitely less effective associates from the 'outside."

We presume that the friends of Mr. Letcher may complain of a want of charity in thus fastening upon him the responsibility that we urge in this connection. We have no hope but that an universal howl of indignation will go out from the columns of every Letcher journal, and the mouth of every Letcher orator, at the unfairness of our conclusions. But we would respectfully refer these editors and speakers to their former course in relation to Harrison, Clay, Taylor, Summers, Fillmore, &c., &c. Were not their speeches and papers filled with the most exciting terms of denunciations against these gentlemen for an infinitely less cause? Did they not paint Henry Clay as an Abolitionist of the most dangerous species, and abuse him in the most unmeasured terms therefor? Did not their columns and voices ring ont the most bitter execrations against Fillmore for the same reason? Did they not go into spasmodic convulsions over the Abolitionism of Borrs, because he made speeches and wrote letters against that eminently "Southern" (?) measure, the Kanzas-Nebraska bill? When the mechanics of the Gosport Navy Yard petitioned that negroes should not be employed in the yard, did not George E. Deneale, the Democratic senator from Rockingham, (in Mr. Letcher's own district,) move that "the dirty thing be carried out on two chips," and did not one general howl of indignation burst with one accord from these professed guardians of the "peculiar institution?" Were not our own neighbors of the "Argus," so late as 1856, horribly exercised because some thoughtless men in derisive sport raised a banner on which was inscribed "Freemount and Dayton?" Did not the Mayor of Portsmouth order that banner to be cut down as a sacrilege to slave soil, and the entire "Democracy" of that time visit upon the heads of the offenders the fiercest denunciations? Has not that party, in fact, from 1840 down to this period affected the extremity of horror over the Abolition proclivities, and denounced as traitors of the worst cast, a thousand natives of Southern soil, who were members of the opposition? Will they be so kind as to recall the annals of the past, and, in view of their spasmodic horror over the little mote of Abolition in *our* eye, can they wonder that *we* should be slightly exercised about the tremendous beam in theirs? Have they not a *thousand times* made a *thousand times* as much ado over *one thousandth part* of the cause we have given?

With these remarks, and in conclusion calling the attention of the reader to the call upon Dr. Ruffner by Moore, Letcher & Co., we respectfully submit the whole matter to the good sense of the people of Virginia:

The Call on Dr. Ruffner.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Lexington, Va., Sept. 1, 1847.

Dear sir:—The undersigned, believing that the argument recently delivered by you in the Franklin Society, in favor of the removal of the negro population from Western Virginia, was not only able, but unanswerable; and that its publication will tend to bring the public mind to a correct conclusion on that momentous question, request that you will furnish us with a full statement of that argument for the press.

We cannot expect that you will now be able to furnish us with the speech precisely as it was delivered, nor is it our wish that you shall confine yourself strictly to the views then expressed. Our desire is to have the whole argument in favor of the proposition, presented to the public, in a perspicuous and condensed form. And believing that your views were not only forcible, but conclusive, and that they were presented in a shape which cannot give just cause of offence to even those who are most fastidious and excitable on all subjects having any connection with the subject of slavery, we trust you will be disposed cheerfully to comply with our request above expressed. Very respectfully,

Your ob't servants,

S. McD. Moore,	J. M. Lacy,
John Letcher,	John Echols,
David P. Curry,	James R. Jordan,
Jas. G. Hamilton,	Jacob Fuller, Jr.,
Geo. A. Baker,	D. E. Moore,

John W. Fuller.

The Rev. Henry Ruffner, D. D.